ALPHONSO DI BORGO;

OR, A

SENTIMENTAL

CORRESPONDENCE

OF THE

Sixteenth Century.

" I hold ambition of ſo airy and light a quality, that it is but a ſhadow's ſhadow." SHAKESPEARE.

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DEDICATION.

TO

LADY HARRY PARKER.

THERE are critical moments in the hiſtory of our lives, in which attentions become ineſtimable, from the peculiarity of the circumſtances which render them neceſſary.

For ſuch attentions, which the Author of the following pages is proud to have received from your family, he feels thoſe grateful ſenſibilities, which no time will be able to obliterate from his memory and heart.

Let

Let it not therefore be deemed preſumption, that he ſhould dedicate to your Ladyſhip the firſt efforts of a juvenile pen; he might perſonally have intruded himſelf on your notice, and ſolicited that privilege he now aſſumes, but he is far from inſenſible that the chief merit of his work will be derived from your patronage; and if there is any plea that can entitle it to your protection, it is the motives which afford him this occaſion—to expreſs to your Ladyſhip the ſentiments of reſpect and eſteem, with which he has the honour to be

Your Ladyſhip's

Moſt obliged,

Humble Servant,

London, THE AUTHOR.
June 1800.

ALPHONSO DI BORGO.

LETTER I.

ALPHONSO DI BORGO *to Lord* MONTACUTE.

THE eventful moment of my exiſtence is at length arrived, and the long-protracted period of my return to thoſe ſcenes of boyiſh remembrance, which fancy has ſo often recalled to my recollection, is no longer retarded; but with what mingled ſenſations of anxiety and grief ſhall I reviſit that ſpot, endeared to me by ſo many ties, the impreſſion of which can never be effaced from my memory? This

morning has my tutor received inſtructions for our immediate return. Unexpected as it is, I dread the motives that occaſion it; and the pleaſing proſpect of tracing once more the ſcenes of earlieſt youth, is embittered by the apprehenſion of the deſtiny which awaits me. You are, perhaps, not acquainted with the motives which influenced my father in ſending me abroad; it was with a view to expand the ideas of a mind, which he conſidered bigotted by education, and too refined by learning; he had in view to root out the romantic and enthuſiaſtic notions I had imbibed, and which formed a leading feature in my character; and, by rendering me converſant with the great world, fit me to ſuſtain that rank to which his ambition would aſpire. But, alas! the variety I have experienced, the ſucceſſion of events to which I have been an eye-witneſs, and the intercourſe I have had with the higher ranks

of

of ſociety, in the various countries through which I have journeyed during an abſence of five years, have only, if poſſible, nouriſhed that diſguſt, with which I had ever contemplated thoſe projects of elevation I had been taught to cheriſh, and invigorated that ſyſtem of romance I had imbibed from nature. Under this impulſe, a perſpective of happineſs formed on ſuch a baſis, on views ſo truly diſcordant with my own ſentiments and feelings, cannot but excite doubts and apprehenſions, accompanied by the moſt painful reflections.

I have hitherto endeavoured to render my correſpondence acceptable to you, by a relation of the ſeveral intereſting events and circumſtances which have paſſed within my knowledge, and by a deſcription of the cuſtoms, manners, and character of the different countries through which I have paſſed. I

now haſtily ſeize a moment to adviſe you of our departure from hence; and relying on that attachment you have ever manifeſted, and the intereſt you have expreſſed in my happineſs, ſhould I now relate to you the domeſtic ſorrows of my life, and reveal to you the unbounded confidence of a heart too ſuſceptible for its own peace, would you hide my foibles with the partiality of friendſhip, would you throw a veil over my errors, and ſympathize in my ſufferings? You have often preſſed it; and always unwilling as I have been to commence a ſubject, on which I might be too apt to expatiate, I will even in my next renew it, and truſt to your long-tried friendſhip for that generous conſideration, you have not in caſes leſs urgent withheld from yours,

ALPHONSO DI BORGO.

LETTER II.

Lord MONTACUTE *to the Count* ALPHONSO DI BORGO.

YOUR letters, my friend, breathe the ſame ſentiments of attachment they are wont to do. You have a friendly heart, and a ſoul impreſſed with every humane feeling. That you are about to return once more to thoſe ſcenes of early remembrance, which your fancy ſtill repreſents to you, gives me pleaſure indeed; and as a parent's liberality has indulged you with ſo long an abſence for your equal advantage and amuſement, I doubt not, but you will conſider his order for your return, as a ſufficient cauſe for haſtening it. It nevertheleſs diſtreſſes me to ſuppoſe, from the melancholy ſtrain of your letter, that

your joys are clouded by the anticipation of ſome dreaded event. In a heart like yours, where the trueſt worth is that of the mind, and the rectitude of your conduct, peace ſhould for ever dwell, nor the ſunſhine of your youth be clouded by ſorrows. Believe me, it gratifies a better principle than vanity to find you remember me at this diſtance; and I heartily truſt that the cloud which now obſcures the proſpects of happineſs in ſtore for you, will ere long be diſperſed. Let not the anticipation of misfortunes break in upon your joys. Remember that various, indeed, is the lot of man, and that in this world we are alike liable to changes and diſappointments.

The feelings of a fond father in beholding again his ſon, after ſo long an abſence, muſt ſurely outweigh every other conſideration: indulge not, therefore, the ſad foreboding

thought. To anticipate misfortunes is unneceſſary; but, when they approach us, we ſhould endeavour to bear them with fortitude and reſignation. However, ſhould thoſe evils which you apprehend await you, or ſhould there be any hidden ſorrow labouring in your breaſt, repoſe the confidence of your heart on one whoſe ſympathizing friendſhip ſhall alleviate your reflections; one, by whom you are honoured, eſteemed, and loved.—Adieu!

LETTER III.

ALPHONSO DI BORGO *to Lord* MONTACUTE.

I AM, at length, after a tedious journey, arrived at Brunſwic, and take the earlieſt occaſion to fulfil my promiſe, which I have a double ſatisfaction in diſcharging, as it affords me the privilege of unboſoming my oppreſſed mind to one who will enter into the extent of my misfortunes, with the genial warmth of ſympathizing friendſhip. Among the different countries I viſited, there is only one which I regretted to quit, ſince it has ſecured to me the moſt valuable treaſure this world affords—a friend: a name too often perverted —a bleſſing which I, indeed, poſſeſs. And, believe me, however engroſſed my heart has been

been with its own griefs, it has not ceaſed to glow with the moſt perfect friendſhip and eſteem for yourſelf. In every author I had read, the character of the Engliſh has been held up to admiration and example. I anticipated, with the moſt lively joy, the proſpect of becoming a reſident in England; and the introduction it gave me to your notice and regard, has been to me an inexhauſtible ſource of mental enjoyment to this period: at the ſame time that it has confirmed the general opinion I had been led to entertain of its generous and unbounded hoſpitality.

My father, whom ſuperſtition and bigotry devoted to a monaſtic life, ſoon finding his reſtleſs and ambitious ſpirit ill ſuited for the offices of monkiſh devotion, to which miſtaken zeal had conſigned him, and his talents better cal-

calculated to ſhine conſpicuous on the great theatre of political intrigue, has, by degrees, inſinuated himſelf into the favour of the court, under the garb of ſanctity, which has ſerved as a mark to conceal that ambition, which is the ruling feature in his mind: ambition, to which he would now ſacrifice the peace and happineſs of a ſon, by raiſing him, in defiance of every obſtacle, to the higheſt pinnacle of human greatneſs. Oh, my Lord! his view in baniſhing me ſo long from his preſence, was in the hope, that, from a more extenſive intercourſe with the great world, my mind might be influenced to a thirſt after the ſplendid ſtations it affords to the ſoul of enterpriſe, and to thoſe who, ſetting aſide the quiet and humble (yet far more deſirable) enjoyments of life, ſeek for aggrandizement, even at the expenſe of fame and reputation.

To

To ſuch a father, can you conceive a diſappointment more painful than to find his ſon, after ſo long an abſence, with a *tutor* of HIS choice, return to him the ſame romantic and enthuſiaſtic being nature formed him, far better fitted to ſuſtain the character of a Petrarch than a Brutus?

In the firſt interview I have had with him, fearful of betraying the fond emotions of parental affection, which my appearance would naturally excite, he received with coolneſs my embrace, and aſſuming the moſt ſerious and commanding air, unfolded to me his views in recalling me home, and, with little preface, overwhelmed me with diſtreſs, by informing me that his object was the ratification of thoſe vows which were made by him in my name ere reaſon or reflection dawned within my breaſt,

breaſt, and which, as you ſhall hear, were the reſult of pride and ambition.

The preſent miniſter owes his elevation to the office he now holds to the influence of my father: his daughter Wilhelmina (in conſideration of this high dignity conferred through his intereſt) was betrothed to me in infancy. Unfortunately, even in early years, ſhe conceived a predilection in my favour; and now, though I have not yet ſeen her, I am given to believe, her fancy paints me in a favourable light; and *that* pride which ſhe has been inſtructed to cheriſh, in preference to every other ſentiment, will doubtleſs operate to falſify the leaſt hope of eſcaping from thoſe chains which others have forged for me. She is now verging on her twentieth year, and, if report may be credited, poſſeſſes many outward pleaſing qualities and innate excellencies.

Care

Care has been induſtriouſly taken to whiſper my return, and the conſequences to reſult from it, to prevent the poſſibility of my evincing any repugnance to a marriage, the very thought of which is hateful to me. My father's commands are abſolute; and while he is ſuffering ambition to predominate over every other conſideration, little does he foreſee the error in which he is plunging himſelf, by perſiſting in an alliance, which lays the foundation of eternal wretchedneſs to his ſon.

You muſt ſuſpend awhile the ſurpriſe which ſuch a declaration will naturally excite in your mind, until I am able to enter on the more painful ſequel of a life, chequered by ſo many untoward events; but before I lay aſide my pen, let me aſſure you of the faithful regard of

Yours,

A. DI BORGO.

LETTER IV.

The ſame to the ſame.

METHINKS, my Lord, you will wonder at the repugnance I ſhould oppoſe to an alliance, which promiſes ſo much of the good things of this world, and places me ſo high in rank and power: even ſo it is. My father looks forward with ſanguine hope and expectation to that day, when Alphonſo di Borgo, the ſon of a monk of the Carmelites, ſhall ſucceed to the miniſtry of this ſovereignty, and rule the helm of the ſtate. Yet would not that ſon accept the ſplendid proſpects it preſents. Oh! no—the more I have ſeen of the corruption of *foreign ſtates*, the more have I been led to contemplate with deteſtation the mercenary tools

tools of arbitrary power; and to become an accomplice in thoſe very acts which my ſoul abhors—no: it can never be!

Yet have I a more powerful motive, that pleads ſtill ſtronger in my breaſt againſt this alliance. Oh, my Lord! my heart is irrevocably devoted to another. Even in earlieſt youth did I diſtinguiſh her; and amid the changing ſcenes that have conſtantly preſented themſelves ſince I laſt beheld her, I have never loſt ſight of thoſe beauties ſhe poſſeſſes, and which are indelibly engraven on my memory, mind, and affections. But, alas! ſhe is a low-born maiden; has no other dowry than her good name and ſpotleſs character to entitle her to the notice of the world: and that, in ſuch an age as this, were leſs than nothing.

She is the daughter of one Rinalto, who was formerly the leader of the royal muſicians, but poſſeſſing ſome mental talents, which he converted to a dangerous purpoſe, by publiſhing a pamphlet of a ſeditious tendency, he was diſmiſſed from his employment, and lived for many years in great retirement, on a ſmall penſion granted to him in conſideration of the former ſtation he held. Here (until the acceſſion of the preſent miniſtry) he devoted himſelf to the education of an only daughter, whom Providence had left him out of the little wreck of his fortunes, until the irreſiſtible temptation of gain which was held out to him allured him from the peaceful ſerenity of mind he enjoyed in ſecluſion from the world, and induced him to become the humble dependant and confidant of my father; who, between menaces, kindneſs, and tyranny, alternately employed, has imperceptibly led him through the

the maze of error, to become the convenient inſtrument of his intriguing views.

Young as I was, and inexperienced in his deſigns, often have I obſerved the myſtery of their conduct, watched their frequent interviews, and noted their conſtant correſpondence; and having often been the unconſcious meſſenger of my father to the lowly dwelling of Rinalto, my youthful and ſuſceptible breaſt ſoon caught the attractions of that too lovely form, which always greeted me with modeſt, downcaſt timidity, at my approach. 'Twas at this period that I firſt learnt the art of diſſimulation; for when my father's ſervices have required my being diſpatched thither, I have feared to betray the eagerneſs with which I received thoſe mandates, which conducted me to the preſence of my beloved Ethelburgha. Often have I marked the crimſon bluſhes that

ſuffuſed her lovely cheeks at my approach, and as often, in the raptures of my feelings, been on the point of falling at her feet, and confeſſing my attachment. But the momentary reflection on the diſparity of our fortunes, and the dread of a father's reſentment, ſuppreſſed the riſing emotions of my heart; and though I have fancied I read in her eyes the language of a heart influenced by a mutual paſſion, yet did I never to this hour declare to her the ſentiments of love and affection with which my boſom glowed.

Perhaps at that age, the rigorous and falſe notions of pride and birth, which had been inſtilled with ſuch care into my youthful mind, might aſſume their empire over me; but as my experience has been informed, and my judgment ripened, inſtead of cheriſhing ſentiments ſo foreign to all ſocial happineſs, I have ſpurned them

them with diſdain, and rooted out every idea that might check the voluntary impulſe of the mind.

My father, I perceive, obſerves me with the moſt ſcrutinizing eye. I have as yet paſſively aſſented to the wiſhes he has manifeſted. Whether he reads the gloom of diſſatisfaction in my features, I know not; but even were it ſo, he would be the laſt perſon to notice it, under the dread of a diſcovery which might alarm the gilded dream of happineſs his ambition has been repreſenting in ſuch lively colours, and ſhake the ſtructure of greatneſs his imagination has been ſo long in erecting.

IN CONTINUATION.

THIS moment I am informed that affairs of urgency call my father from the capital, and that the Counteſs Wilhelmina will to-morrow

expect a visit from me. Oh! may I find her destitute of those pleasing qualities the world reports her to possess: it speaks loud in her praise. Her affability is the general topic of admiration; her benevolence, the pattern for example: yet, my Lord, I cannot love her. She must be the victim of pride—I, of hated ambition! And though I were ingenuously to confess to her the secret that wrings my heart, and she possess a soul so noble as to resign me, even then parental authority would preponderate in the scale of humanity and compassion, and Ethelburgha would be a sharer in the general catastrophe.

You encourage me to write, and to repose my confidence on you.—Farewell! When this *to-morrow* is past, you shall hear again from

ALPHONSO DI BORGO.

LETTER

LETTER V.

The ſame to the ſame.

Encloſed in the preceding.

THE revolution my whole frame has experienced ſince cloſing my letter to you, has chaſed for ever peace from my mind, and repoſe from my couch. To divert the tedious hours of night I take up my pen, to unboſom to you my o'ercharged heart; it is the only pleaſure I can now enjoy, and ſurely 'tis derived from a melancholy ſource.

I took a ramble this afternoon alone, to ruminate in ſilence on my unhappy deſtiny. Heedleſs of the route I purſued, chance, or perhaps inclination, directed my ſteps towards the

humble cottage of Rinalto; 'tis a ſhort league from the capital, and famed for the beauty of its ſituation; ſtanding in the covert of a grove, altogether obſcured by luxuriant foliage, and rendered doubly attractive to me from the fair form which inhabits its lowly roof. I had not ventured thither ſince my arrival; for I have much feared the prying eye of curious ſuſpicion watches my every movement. My father's abſence, and the welcome that always marked my viſits on the countenances of the good Dame Jacintha and Rinalto, encouraged me to enter the threſhold. All was ſilent, and no human form viſible. After waiting a few moments, irreſolute whether to go or not, a form more celeſtial than mortal appeared—'twas Ethelburgha! 'twas indeed herſelf! The agitation of her frame on beholding me thus unexpectedly was not to be concealed; ſhe faintly exclaimed, "Alphonſo di Borgo!"

and

and fell ſenſeleſs in theſe arms. Shortly after entered Rinalto, followed by Jacintha, his wife; equally ſurpriſed to find their daughter in the arms of a ſtranger; till Rinalto recogniſing me, a mixture of terror and anxiety ſeemed to pervade his features, for which I was wholly unable to account: he ſeated himſelf for a few moments, and appeared wrapt in thought; till ſuddenly riſing, he quitted the apartment. Wholly occupied in reſtoring the inanimate form of Ethelburgha, the eager inquiries and congratulations of Jacintha (whoſe volubility was not to be reſtrained) were diſregarded, until ſhe gradually revived; but being unable to recover the diſorder of her ſpirits, begged permiſſion to retire. 'Twas then I learnt from Jacintha the melancholy hiſtory I ſhall now relate to you, which, while it aſſured me of the fond regard of Ethelburgha, diſtracted me in the contemplation of the extinguiſhed hope of

any alleviation to thoſe ſorrows, that were undermining the health, and even the life, of the object of my affections.

I learnt, that ſoon after I quitted Brunſwic a viſible alteration appeared in Ethelburgha, and that a deep depreſſion gradually ſettled on her ſpirits; that ſhe had frequently been queſtioned as to its origin, and that at length ſhe had unfolded to her mother, under a promiſe that it never ſhould be divulged, the ſecret that was labouring in her breaſt. She acknowledged the extent of a paſſion for me, which ſhe had endeavoured vainly to overcome, from a conviction of the hopeleſſneſs of its ever being returned. Jacintha further informed me, ſhe had at length found it expedient to reveal the whole affair to Rinalto, who, from dread of the conſequences ſuch a diſcovery would cauſe, ſhould it ever reach the ears of my father, charged

charged his daughter, as ſhe valued his ſafety, to conquer a weakneſs which aimed at his deſtruction, and which the diſparity of rank and ſituation rendered ſo impoſſible ever to be attended with happineſs to herſelf.

I was no longer at a loſs to account for the ſtrangeneſs of Rinalto's conduct, as the motives of it had been thus explained. I foreſaw, that, however dazzled the Dame Jacintha might be with the proſpect of ſuch an alliance for her daughter, which might induce her to encourage and connive at my viſits to the cottage, a combination of difficulties would ariſe on the part of Rinalto, whoſe life, alas! is now in the power of my father. Loſt in a ſtupor of grief and mental agony, I ſate till the voice of Jacintha, which had repeatedly forewarned me of the lateneſs of the hour, rouſed me. I quitted that ſpot, which contained the ſum of all

all my earthly happineſs, and walked ſlowly homeward through the wood, regardleſs of the gloom of night, till my attention was rudely arreſted by a footſtep; 'twas Rinalto—he halted. "Purpoſely," ſaid he, "have I waylaid you: I come, Count, to warn you of your danger—know in me your friend—your ſteps are watched—the eye of ſuſpicion is ever vigilant—you muſt never enter my dwelling more—Your father is powerful; I am in his power—conquer this unworthy paſſion, that would diſhonour my child—conſider in yourſelf the deſtined huſband of the Counteſs Wilhelmina. One word more; beware—leſt in purſuing this guilty and unlawful paſſion of your heart you devote to deſtruction the father of Ethelburgha." Saying this he left me, and in a ſtate of mind better to be conceived than deſcribed. Love, madneſs, and deſpair, alternately took poſſeſſion of my ſoul, when I reflected,

reflected, that all hope of seeing Ethelburgha again, of pouring forth at her feet the fond effusions of love, were gone, were fled for ever.

LETTER VI.

Lord MONTACUTE *to the Count* ALPHONSO DI BORGO.

YOUR narrative, my friend, becomes intereſting indeed, and I fear the attempt to adminiſter comfort to you were vain. To ſay I lament your lot, were to expreſs little of my feelings. I would for your own peace and happineſs wiſh you to forget Ethelburgha: that, you will ſay, is impoſſible. We are ever graſping ſome beautiful idea, ſome pleaſing project in our brain, and eagerly anticipate its attainment; but, at length, the gay colouring that fancy gives it at the firſt tranſient perſpective goes off, like thoſe various figures in the

the gilded clouds, which, if we gaze upon long, faint before the eye, and are loſt: thus, it is, my friend, with you. Your romantic imagination has repreſented to your view ſweet dreams of happineſs; and the painful diſappointments you are daily experiencing, will, I fear, prey too heavily upon your ſpirits.

Yet, my friend, let me entreat you not to be too haſty in cenſuring yourſelf as indifferent to the Counteſs Wilhelmina, or to lament yourſelf as unhappy beyond remedy. Doubtleſs, in your interview with her, you will diſcover thoſe charms which the world believe her to inherit: a mind like yours cannot be long inſenſible to them. You will recollect that you have loſt that only which you could not retain; and ere you murmur at your diſappointed hopes, you ſhould call to mind, that

that no object, however ſublime, no ſounds, however charming and harmonious, can continue to afford us delight, when they no longer ſtrike us with novelty. It is indeed ſaid, that ſome women poſſeſs the power of renovating the art of pleaſing in an eminent degree, though the attempts of artifice muſt ever be too glaring to the enthuſiaſtic mind. Endeavour to ſhake off this hidden paſſion, in which your reaſonable faculties are abſorbed, and which, while you cheriſh it, will render you inſenſible to happineſs.

But having ſaid thus much, and aſſumed the privilege of a friend ſo far, I will forbear; I know how much difference there is found between theory and practice. You will obſerve, I do not fill my letters with the common topics of the day, but would anxiouſly ſeek the means in my power to calm every

haraſſing diſquiet in your breaſt, and fortify your mind againſt the ſevereſt ſtrokes of fate. I will now conclude, by thanking you for your unbounded confidence, which, while its relation diſtreſſes me, confirms the ſentiments of friendſhip I have ever believed you to poſſeſs for

Yours,

MONTACUTE.

LETTER VII.

ALPHONSO DI BORGO *to Lord* MONTACUTE.

THE day that, in ſome meaſure, ſhould decide the fate of your friend, is at length arrived; and the interview, ſo much dreaded on my part, has conſequently enſued. About noon I waited on the Counteſs Wilhelmina; ſhe received me alone; I found in her features all that I remembered of her, when I was accuſtomed to her ſociety. Every aſſiſtance that art could afford to a pleaſing form, was added to enhance the faſcinating power of thoſe charms, which I contemplated without any emotion, ſave that ariſing from compaſſion and regret, that they were not deſtined to

be beſtowed on an object more capable of feeling their power, and eſtimating their value. Through the pride it was evident ſhe wiſhed to aſſume, to enable her to ſupport a dignity of character, it was plainly to be perceived that it was but a maſk, to conceal the ſtifled ſenſations of a heart too fatally prepoſſeſſed in my favour. Had *I* a heart to beſtow, I know no one more likely to win it, or one to whom I could ſooner be diſpoſed to make a ſacrifice of its affections than to herſelf; indeed, to an indifferent perſon, added to a pleaſing exterior, graceful addreſs, and many accompliſhments, ſhe has much to recommend her to an object more deſerving her regard than myſelf. When I obſerved to her, that it was in obedience to the commands my father had ſignified to me, that I waited on her, ſhe ſeemed much affected, though the chilling coldneſs that marked my conduct towards her,

during a painful interval of two hours, drew from her lips not the ſmalleſt reproach. Nevertheleſs, the conflicts in my own mind were moſt acute; and it was with difficulty I reſtrained thoſe emotions, which prompted me, in the poſture of ſupplication, by a full acknowledgment of my attachment to another, to confeſs myſelf unworthy of her, ſince I had diſpoſed of that heart, which, in right, belonged to her. But a partial confidence muſt have been attended with danger, ſince no pains would have been ſpared to diſcover this concealed amour; and to have revealed its object, might have accelerated the deſtruction of thoſe beings, whoſe welfare is far dearer than my own.

However, 'tis not yet too late; I muſt be better acquainted with her character, ere I truſt the little wreck of my hopes on too uncertain

certain a foundation. Then may I write to her, and the language of a deſpairing lover may plead more powerfully than the faltering tale delivered from my lips. If ſhe be the noble character the world believes her, will ſhe not exult in the reflection of having done a great action; and, by having combated her own feelings, ſecure the happineſs of the man ſhe loves? But it will not be; powerful motives oppoſe the ſlighteſt hope, that in this act ſhe dare follow the impulſe of her will. The mortification of a refuſal from me would kindle ſuch a furious torrent of revenge, that nothing but the ſacrifice of its innocent object could extinguiſh.

LETTER VIII.

The ſame to the ſame.

WELL nigh had my ingenuous nature ſuffered, and thoſe dear deluſive hopes, which alone ſupport me through this conflict between love and duty, been at one blow cruſhed. My father ſtill remains abſent from the court, and this morning a courier has brought me a packet from him, commanding, in the moſt imperious and dictatorial manner, the ratification of thoſe vows which were made in my behalf to the Counteſs Wilhelmina; he continues to point out the advantages to reſult from this alliance, which he, in his parental affection, has negotiated; and concludes by obſerving, that the

the pride of her family begins to take umbrage at the little eagerneſs manifeſted by me towards the concluſion of an event, which I was ſummoned hither to celebrate, and which is conſidered as my paſſport to happineſs and fortune. Now could I curſe thoſe ſelfiſh ſordid views that have influenced my father in the onſet of this buſineſs. Why did not Nature form me in the ſame mould with himſelf? Then ſhould our deſires have beat in uniſon, and ambition have reigned in that breaſt, where love and enthuſiaſtic paſſion ſit triumphant. Then ſhould I have ſoared on eagle's wings to that ſeat in the ſenate, which I would now willingly reject. 'Tis ſuch a ſeat of corruption, bribery, and villany, that the ſoul which has never been ſhackled by the fetters of dependency, avarice, and policy, contemplates with horror; and to become an accomplice in the fraud, to countenance acts of le-

giſlative power, where the voice of the people is neither known or conſulted—periſh ſuch liberty! Oh, my Lord! we breathe not here the pure uncontaminated air of your dear England! We know liberty but by name! Oh, could the feeble powers of Nature's eloquence ſpeak through me, and be inſtrumental in tranſplanting the ſweets of it to this ſoil; and in plucking up by the roots this hateful ſyſtem of arbitrary power, I would forget the tumult of domeſtic ſtrife; I would ſet aſide every conſideration in which my own happineſs is involved, to ſecure the bleſſings of real liberty to the people. But, no! This tongue that now ſpeaks the language of the heart, muſt be chained, and in the ſchool of politics muſt I learn to ſhut out every avenue to the pleadings of nature and humanity.

My

My thoughts have wandered; I am toſſed to and fro by jarring elements, and, like the tottering veſſel, have to buffet with the tempeſt. Oh, my Lord! adviſe me, tutor me. Which way ſhall I elude the ſtorms of impending fate? My father's intereſt, his conſequence, nay, his very faith, is pledged in this affair; and I muſt either give the lie to the whole court, and be witneſs to his downfal from the pinnacle of greatneſs, to which his ambition has raiſed him, or be myſelf the inſtrument of my eternal deſpair.

That Ethelburgha loves me, loves me too tenderly, I can no longer doubt. The emotions ſhe betrayed in my preſence, too ſurely confirm the relation I received from the Dame Jacintha her mother; and will ſhe ſurvive this act of infidelity I am about to commit? The tender ſentiments ſhe cheriſhes for me have

already undermined the beauty of her youth, and will, I fear, blaſt the fair proſpect of her ripening years. This lovely plant has bloſſomed in obſcurity, and thoſe charms which Nature has beſtowed on the faireſt of her works, are deſtined to droop unheeded and unknown.

I muſt ſee her again, pour out the feelings of my ſoul to her tender ear, aſſure her of my irrevocable affection, of my involuntary ſubmiſſion to this dire act, deplore the horrible conſequences of that ambition which divides me from all hopes of earthly happineſs, and then reſign myſelf to the fate which awaits me. Accept the aſſurance of that eſteem, with which I ſubſcribe myſelf, as ever,

Yours,

ALPHONSO DI BORGO.

LETTER IX.

Lord MONTACUTE *to* ALPHONSO DI BORGO.

YOUR letters give me, indeed, ſo hopeleſs an account of the ſtate of your mind, that I am almoſt tempted to decline anſwering them; yet you aſk me for advice, you entreat me to direct your ſteps. Alas! I fear you are too far involved in your own griefs, to liſten to the ſoothing arguments of friendſhip: to offer them, in the violence of your ſorrows, muſt be intruſive and unavailing; let me only endeavour to divert you from the intention you have expreſſed. If I may judge, by the hints that you have thrown out, you purpoſe

ſeeing

ſeeing Ethelburgha again. But to what end? Is it to increaſe the agonies ſhe muſt experience in eternal ſeparation from you, or is it to annihilate the virtuous reſolves you have formed?

Your ſituation is lamentable, I grant it; but every reflection that your mind can beſtow in its preſent diſtracted ſtate, muſt point out the neceſſity of your yielding to the dictates of parental authority. View, unbiaſſed, each ſide of the queſtion; contemplate the conſequences of your refuſal. What would they produce? Deſtruction inevitable to Ethelburgha! I would, by the voice of friendſhip, warn you againſt any procraſtination of your marriage with the Counteſs. To what end delay it? Will it not create ſuſpicion; and will not that ſuſpicion be reſolved into the moſt dangerous certainties? Conſider this well;

well; and, if poſſible, root out the remembrance of Ethelburgha from your heart. Oppoſe *virtue* to inclinations; and the violence of your deſpondency will ere long ſubſide, and you will yield to the ſoothing conſolations of ſympathy.

You acknowledge very juſtly the merits of the Counteſs Wilhelmina, and the charms ſhe poſſeſſes both in mind and perſon; and it were wrong, amid the pleaſures you conſider her capable of imparting, to regret the bloſſoms of a tranſient ſpring. The Counteſs Wilhelmina eſteems, nay, loves you; and time will wear off an attachment, which has taken ſuch deep root in your heart. I pity you from my ſoul; but we are all born with paſſions which ebb and flow to different objects: turn, then, from the tide of yours,

nor

nor waſte your time and health by increaſing your miſery. Let me hear from you, and believe me ever

Yours,

MONTACUTE.

LETTER X.

ALPHONSO DI BORGO *to Lord* MONTACUTE.

Written before the laſt was received.

YIELDING to the impulſe of my feelings, I reſolved to riſk an interview with Ethelburgha: regardleſs of the dangers attendant on it, and the conſequences liable to reſult from it, ſhould it be known: the difficulty of obtaining it alone perplexed me.

Revolving in my mind the beſt method of accompliſhing my purpoſe, I ſat down, and dictated a letter to Ethelburgha, imploring her acquieſcence in my requeſt. To my ſervant,

Duval,

Duval, whoſe fidelity has been ſo often put to the teſt, and whoſe attachment to me I have every reaſon to believe ſincere, I committed it, as, being a ſtranger here, he would be leaſt liable to ſuſpicion. I cautioned him to repair to the vicinity of Rinalto's cottage, and to ſeize any opportunity that might offer of his abſence to deliver it to herſelf. Fortunately he ſucceeded. I muſt await in anxious ſuſpenſe the hour of appointment: ſurely ſhe cannot, will not, refuſe this only favour it may ever be in my power to aſk, or hers to grant.

To-morrow, at the cloſe of day, have I fixed; if ſhe comes not, then am I, indeed, bereft of every conſolation: a row of elms, which ſhade the lofty turrets of a Gothic pile of ruins near her father's cottage, is the ſpot I have ſelected. I have often wandered through theſe

melancholy arches now mouldering to decay: the ſuperſtitious peaſants believe ſome troubled ſpirits haunt this place, and many piteous mourns have been heard by them. Dreadful tales have indeed been whiſpered of ſtrange and horrid deeds which have been there committed. 'Twas formerly inhabited by the late miniſter the Baron Leiptzein, who died ſuddenly: vague conjectures were formed as to the occaſion of his death. His lady, who was the idol of the villagers, from the beneficent liberality ſhe diſplayed among them, had been married to him but a ſhort time; ſhe was then with child, and it was generally reported, that the grief which the loſs of her lord occaſioned, preyed ſo heavily upon her mind, that it terminated in a diſorder of the brain; and that, at length, after a ſhort confinement, ſhe died, and with her the unborn offſpring of their marriage. Time and change have

have obliterated the recollection of this event, though, perhaps, there may be thoſe monſters, in the ſhape of men, who would willingly forget it; but ſelf-accuſing conſcience will intrude: that cannot be ſhut out. This brings to my recollection ſome very beautiful lines of one of your Engliſh poets:

" Conſcience, what art thou? thou tremendous pow'r
Who doſt inhabit us without our leave,
And art within ourſelves another ſelf;
A *maſter-ſelf*, that loves to domineer,
And treat the monarch frankly as the ſlave?
How doſt thou light a torch to diſtant deeds,
Make the paſt preſent, and the future frown?"

However, be it as it will, the day of retribution muſt one day come, when the ſecrets of all hearts ſhall be diſcloſed, and theſe trophies of man's ambition moulder into duſt with himſelf. 'Tis an awful conſideration, yet no leſs a juſt one; and could it enter into the heart

heart of man oftener than it does, might reſcue from eternal miſery millions of unhappy beings.

Forgive theſe wanderings; nor wonder, my Lord, that, in the diſordered ſtate of my mind, I ſhould forget myſelf: yet, while memory holds her ſeat in this diſordered brain, ſhall I revere your virtues, and feel honoured by your friendſhip.—Adieu!

ALPHONSO DI BORGO.

LETTER XI.

The ſame to the ſame.

YOUR ſalutary advice, my Lord, came too late to benefit the unhappy being whom you honoured by offering it; I have ſeen her, in theſe arms have I claſped her to my faithful boſom, and enjoyed the ſupreme felicity of hearing from her lips, the full avowal of her love. But, oh, diſtracting thought! to know that this mutual paſſion, which forms the ſum and ſoul of our exiſtence, can never be crowned by our union, and that we are alike doomed to prove the bitter pangs of eternal ſeparation! I have, indeed, ſeen her, but for the *laſt time*. In the agonies of deſpair, I ventured

ventured to propoſe to her to fly from the hated walls of Brunſwic, and ſeek, in the arms of her faithful Alphonſo, an aſylum from perſecution; but all the motives I could urge in favour of our flight were of no avail. Fancy painted to her imagination the accumulated evils ſuch a ſtep would heap on her aged father; and when the anguiſh of her mind had, in ſome degree, relieved itſelf by a flood of tears, virtue, filial love, and duty, triumphed over the ſofter emotions of her ſoul, and, in a tone of voice deeply impreſſive, ſhe bad me adieu for ever! The dignity, the majeſty that beamed in her eyes, while ſhe pronounced a laſt adieu, awed me into ſilence. Again I folded her in my arms, gazed with rapture on the heavenly viſion, when ſhe diſengaged herſelf from my embraces, and darted inſtantly from my ſight.

This ſcene has ſunk deep into my heart. Whither, O whither ſhall I fly from the evils which threaten to overpower me quite? Alas! I know not.—O! could I plunge into the heat of the battle, and ſeek in a glorious death relief from all my ſorrows!—Adieu!

LETTER

LETTER XII.

The ſame to the ſame.

THERE are moments in our exiſtence in which death would be a welcome relief from our thoughts; and yet when we reflect that the means are in our power of ending all our cares in this world, we ſhrink back from the uſe of them. What torments are more painful than thoſe ariſing from diſappointed love? I feel them! Why was I endowed with reaſon and reflection? why was I born with paſſions to be the bane of my exiſtence? Surely they were intended to be exerciſed: nature confirms it.—I had formed a plan of happineſs to myſelf, never to be realized—the meaſure of my

cup is full—I feel myſelf almoſt inſenſible to all things on this ſide eternity.

My father is at length returned, and eager now for the celebration of our nuptials, which are to be ſolemnized at the caſtle of the Count Walſtein. Buſy preparations are making for this event, which is to be the ſource of feſtivity and joy to the inhabitants of Brunſwic—but to me the ſource of endleſs miſery. My mind is all engroſſed with thought of Ethelburgha; her dear image fills up the limits of my wandering imagination. Is there then a world of penance greater than this? and can the torments of the condemned criminal be greater than the pangs I ſuffer? Ethelburgha has voluntarily reſigned me. But much I fear, that, for the heroiſm of a moment, which a ſenſe of virtue enabled her to ſupport, ſhe will repay in many hours of bittereſt anguiſh.

May

May that Power, which at ſuch a moment inſpired her with a courage above her ſex, ſupport her when ſhe ſhall hear the public voice proclaim, that Alphonſo di Borgo, involuntarily led to the altar, ſhall pronounce thoſe vows which ſeparate him for ever from Ethelburgha!—Adieu!

LETTER XIII.

The ſame to the ſame.

EVERY day is marked by ſome unlooked-for event. The Counteſs Wilhelmina has propoſed to Rinalto to take his daughter as an attendant on her perſon. Duval informs me he ſaw her to-day enter the Count Walſtein's houſe. It muſt be ſo! Yet ſure ſhe never will accept the humble office of a dependant—her ideas are too noble—ſhe was born to grace a better ſtation, and has a ſoul which towers above the outward garb of lowly birth ſhe wears. But may not her refuſal excite ſuſpicion, and the beauty ſhe poſſeſſes confirm it? There is a modeſt, yet commanding dignity, in her demeanour, and the jealous and penetrating diſcernment

cernment of the Counteſs muſt ſuſpect ſome ſecret motive would impel her in declining an office, by which ſo many would feel themſelves honoured. Should her affability and eaſy manners win on the unſuſpecting heart of Ethelburgha, ſhe may be induced to betray that ſecret, which, if incautiouſly revealed, would bring with it inevitable ruin.

My father's return to the capital has been marked by various acts of kindneſs towards me; and the tame ſubmiſſion with which I ſeem to bend to every wiſh his miſtaken zeal and affection urge him to form, entitles me only to a greater ſhare in his eſteem. But ſure his obſerving eye muſt diſcern that I am not happy, and that this alliance has no charms in it for me. He may conſider the gloom that pervades my whole deportment, to ariſe only from ſome romantic notions, not yet deſtroyed,

and

and which the new career I am to commence will ſpeedily diſſipate.

Incapable of judging of any of the finer feelings of the ſoul from his own experience, he can form no idea of their operation. His preſent ambition is centred in this one object; and its attainment will be to him the higheſt ſource of exultation, as it will tend to ſecure the laſting friendſhip of the man, who owes his elevation to him, and might otherwiſe wiſh to forget the means by which it was obtained.

What paſſed in the interview between the Counteſs Wilhelmina and Ethelburgha, I am yet to learn: although I have repeatedly ſought a moment's converſation with Ethelburgha, ſhe remains inflexiblle to my entreaties.

IN CONTINUATION.

'Tis as I ſuſpected—Ethelburgha has refuſed the offers that have been made to her. Wilhelmina is ſurpriſed—her father incenſed at the indignity—and Ethelburgha's beauty the general topic of diſcourſe. The entire ſecluſion in which ſhe lived rendered her exiſtence little known, and leſs regarded, till this circumſtance occurred. Manners ſo poliſhed, addreſs ſo refined, were little expected in the daughter of Rinalto.

However, the conjectures reſulting from this will ſoon paſs over, and give place to the buſtle and confuſion about to reign at Brunſwic. To-morrow is the day which unites me to Wilhelmina, and perjures my affection to Ethelburgha. 'Tis a reflection that brings with it ſuch acute pangs to a ſenſible and feeling mind,

mind, to a mind not deaf to the pleadings of humanity, that it almoſt diſtracts me: I pace my chamber to and fro—till, worn out with hopeleſs grief, I give ſome vent to the fulneſs of my heart, by dictating its feelings to one, whoſe kind conſideration is alone capable of affording any alleviation to the ſufferings of

ALPHONSO DI BORGO.

LETTER XIV.

The ſame to the ſame.

THE fatal knot is tied!—Yeſterday did I, lead the Counteſs Wilhelmina to the altar: how I conducted myſelf through the ceremony I know not. Timidity and reproach ſeemed to be diſplayed in her features; while the involuntary embrace I gave her at the concluſion of the ceremony was an effort above myſelf.

At this hour, that feſtivity and gladneſs reign at Brunſwic, is there more cauſe for ſorrow and mourning, ſince the tears of Ethelburgha are falling unhallowed to the ground. Wilhelmina ſeems unhappy, ſpite of the efforts

ſhe

ſhe makes to aſſume an air of ſatisfaction. The diſorder and diſcompoſure of my ſpirits affects her very ſenſibly; and the tender ſolicitude ſhe manifeſts diſtreſſes me, from the conviction of my unworthineſs. Oh, were ſhe leſs amiable, leſs deſerving of happineſs, I could ſupport better my wretched fate! But ſhe merits every return that love, that gratitude, can dictate. Never does the leaſt murmur or reproach eſcape her; but her endeavours are unwearied in forcing me to become ſenſible of the endearing qualities ſhe poſſeſſes.—Alas! confidence were now too late, elſe might I find in herſelf a ſympathizing friend. No—no: I muſt hide the ſecret that conſumes me in my own breaſt, till this feeble frame is exhauſted, and mine eyes are cloſed in the ſleep of death. Adieu!

LETTER XV.

Lord MONTACUTE *to* ALPHONSO DI BORGO.

YOUR ſeveral letters have reached me, but I forbore to intrude upon you with offers of conſolation, having made one effort, which proved too fruitleſs to my hopes and expectations. Yet, I beg you to be aſſured, that nothing has diminiſhed the ſentiments of love and eſteem with which I diſmiſſed my laſt letter.

I will only hope, that when your preſent violence of paſſion ſubſides, which is now become equally unlawful and unjuſt, a more cool and tranquil affection will take place in your breaſt. Could that kind of love be kept alive

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in the married ſtate, which makes the charms of a ſingle one, the ſovereign good would be no longer ſought for; in the union of two lovers it would be found: but reaſon informs us this is impoſſible, and experience confirms it. I would willingly relieve the inſipidity of this epiſtle by a relation of any news, though I have none to tell you that deſerves your notice. There is ſome proſpect of a ſecret expedition from this country, in which it is moſt probable I ſhall be engaged; therefore I truſt your correſpondence will be unremitting, as I have too ſincere an intereſt in all that regards you, not to hope that, ere long, you will recover a ſerenity of mind, which will enable you to partake that happineſs, which is yet reſerved for you with Wilhelmina. I well know the weight of your preſent diſtreſs, how much need you have of comfort, and how little comfort can be given.

Diſtreſs, ſuch as yours, lacerates the mind, and breaks the whole ſyſtem of purpoſes and hopes. All this, in the viciſſitude of things, we are alike deſtined to experience; and what a happineſs, what a comfort is it, that there is always ſomething to look forward to, ſome Being immutable and unfailing, to whoſe mercy man may have recourſe!

I have caught the infection of your letters, and have begun to moralize before I was aware of it; there is, however, no uſe in communicating to you *my* heavineſs of heart.—Adieu!

LETTER XVI.

ALPHONSO DI BORGO *to Lord* MONTACUTE.

I HAD ſitten down to write to you, my Lord, juſt as I received your kind letter; I have intelligence to convey to you, the relation of which will make you ſhudder. The fair, the beautiful, the ſpotleſs form of Ethelburgha, is now immured within the walls of a cloiſter. I am informed that Rinalto, through the intereſt of my father, has obtained her admiſſion into the convent of the Carmelites. I ever dreaded the turn her reſolutions would take, but never imagined ſuch a ſtep ſhe would have purſued or effected; perhaps the hint of ſuch a project to Rinalto, might, from conſiderations of his perſonal ſafety, have been

ſtrongly ſeconded by him, and, in the diſordered ſtate of her mind, might ſhe eaſily have been ſwayed to accede to her own propoſal. I am informed by Duval, whom I have cauſed to make frequent inquiries reſpecting her, that the wild delirium of grief, which at firſt ſeized her, on hearing the news of my marriage, has gradually ſubſided into a ſettled melancholy; that ſhe ſcarce ſees or ſpeaks to any one; and that her ſinking ſpirits are at length quite gone. Oh, Ethelburgha! little didſt thou merit ſuch a fate: born with every rare endowment, faſhioned in Nature's moſt perfect mould, poſſeſſing virtues ſo rarely to be found, thou waſt formed to give happineſs to the object of thy favoured choice, to add luſtre to ſociety, and to diffuſe thy benign influence over the circle, who ſhould have felt the bounty of thy liberal and indulgent hand. Now ſhould Nature weep to

contemplate the deſtructive power of ambition, which has robbed the world of the faireſt of Nature's works.

The apprehenſions of your leaving England afford me much ſubject for uneaſineſs; ſince, in the event of that, I ſhall be deprived of the only ſolace which is now left to yours,

A. DI BORGO.

LETTER

LETTER XVII.

ETHELBURGHA *to* ALPHONSO DI BORGO.

Enclosed in the preceding.

Dated from the Convent of the Carmelites.

FROM these cloistered walls, where Ethelburgha has taken refuge from a persecuting and oppressive world, with humiliating shame and sorrow, she presumes to address these lines to him, who to her was, in this world, her all. She dared, indeed, to look up with presumptuous hope to the possession of his heart—of his affections; nor did she consider the great barrier birth and fortune had placed between herself and him, until she found the attempt to banish him from her thoughts fruitless and unavailing.

That Ethelburgha has loved you, ere ſhe knew her own heart, her tortured feelings too well can tell; yet, having once reſigned you, let it not be deemed a crime, that ſhe claims this laſt indulgence, ere ſhe devote to her God that heart, that ſoul, and thoſe affections, which have long been beſtowed on the Count Alphonſo di Borgo.

Amidſt all the calamities ſhe is ſuffering through your father, let her not be unmindful that ſhe owes to his influence her admiſſion into theſe ſacred walls, where ſhe has ſought an aſylum from woe; yet does ſhe ſtill feel, alas! too powerfully the intereſt you have in her heart; and by ſevere penance and rigid devotion ſhe will hope to root out this unlawful and unworthy paſſion from her breaſt. In the probationary office ſhe is now performing, to prepare her for a final reſignation and excluſion

excluſion from the world, it behoves her to ſhut out all communication with it, and all thoſe thoughts connected with the objects it inhabits. But ere ſhe bids you an eternal adieu! ſuffer her to retrace the ſcenes of earlieſt youth, when, "unſuſpecting the world's ſubtilties," ſhe indulged the pleaſing idea of loving you, and of looking forward with eager anxiety and anticipation for the moment that you ſhould appear at the cottage of Rinalto. How did her heart beat at your approach, how ſink at your departure! When, at length, the news reached her of your having quitted Brunſwic, then it was ſhe perceived the ſtrength of her attachment to you; then the only happineſs ſhe knew, was to weep in ſilence your abſence, and contemplate your bleſt return. At length the rumour reached her of the ſplendid alliance which was formed for you; nor till

then were her eyes opened to the dreadful gulf which ſeparated you from her for ever. You know the reſt; the emotions your unexpected preſence excited; nor was it in the power of a weak girl to hide the genuine feelings of a heart devoted to love and you. But great as the ſacrifice was, ſhe reſolved to relinquiſh you, nor impede the proſpects of happineſs parental care had formed. A double conſideration demanded it, when ſhe reflected that a parent's life would, perhaps, have been the forfeit of YOUR diſobedience. Let this reflection calm the feelings of her mind; and the ſacrifice ſhe has made to the cauſe of virtue reconcile her to her fate. Ethelburgha has ſeen the Counteſs Wilhelmina: ſhe is worthy of your love; let no guilty paſſion oppoſe it. Cultivate her friendſhip, her eſteem; and the gratitude her conduct

is calculated to excite in your breaſt, cannot fail to be exchanged for a more tender ſentiment. Conſider that Ethelburgha, by exerting a little fortitude above the level of her ſex, has become the only victim where there might have been many. The world is ſtill ignorant of the paſſion by which you would have debaſed yourſelf: may it ſtill be ſo! To your lovely bride has Ethelburgha committed the ſecret of our attachment; and if it be preſumed that ſhe has wiſhed to arrogate to herſelf ſome merit, yet has ſhe entruſted to her ear the ſtory of her hapleſs fate from a more noble principle. Wilhelmina loves you, ſhe tenderly loves you; therefore 't is unworthy your noble mind to withhold from a return of that affection ſhe is capable of inſpiring. You have a feeling heart; Ethelburgha knows it thoroughly: warm as life is your love, and without bounds. Beſtow it upon a woman

more

more noble, more worthy, than poor Ethelburgha. Repoſe your ſorrows in her breaſt: Ethelburgha ſhall you never more behold; her form, be aſſured, will never interpoſe between you and her affections. But amid the lonely walls of a cloiſter ſhall Ethelburgha bemoan her hapleſs and preſumptuous love; while the laſt prayer ſhe offers up to the throne of Heaven will be for Alphonſo di Borgo.

Faſt flow her tears, dead are her hopes, and fled her deareſt proſpects; yet ſhall a ſmile ſometimes illumine her cheeks, when ſhe contemplates the faded wreath of fancied pleaſure ſhe had woven.

Here tracing the path of duty, the tumult of her feelings muſt gradually ſubſide; and, in the frequent recollection of her ſufferings,

ſhall

ſhall Ethelburgha have reaſon to rejoice in being delivered from a world, in which ſhe muſt have been a ſtranger to happineſs or peace.—Adieu!

LETTER

LETTER XVIII.

Lord MONTACUTE *to the Count* ALPHONSO DI BORGO.

Written previous to the Receipt of the laſt.

I HASTEN to communicate to you, that the King having been pleaſed to conſide to me the command of the army deſtined on the ſecret expedition, I ſhall expect to embark early in the next week. I regret that this circumſtance will deprive me for a while of my much-eſteemed friend's intereſting and valued correſpondence; yet, having been for ſo many years attached to the military ſervice of my country, I cannot but feel that ardour and thirſt after an opportunity of rendering my ſervices eminently diſtinguiſhed wherever it may demand them. The King, it is well known, has joined the alliance againſt the French,

French, and it may naturally be concluded that a deſcent will be made upon the Low Countries.

The long peace our kingdom has enjoyed, has ſomewhat unfitted it for military expeditions; but the preparations which have been long making for this enterpriſe, and which have been carried on with ſo much vigour, promiſe the greateſt ſucceſs. Independent of the zeal and thirſt which the King evidently manifeſts after glory rather than intereſt, the cheerful alacrity which prevails throughout the army, in haſtening the neceſſary progreſs of the expedition, are ſufficient omens of a proſperous campaign. A ſoldier's life is, of all others, the moſt precarious and uncertain. We are here to-day, and gone to-morrow; therefore, my friend, you muſt not expect to hear from me again; and our route is ſo uncertain,

certain, that I cannot ſay where you may addreſs to me. Should the chance of war prove propitious to my return, I ſhall loſe no time in informing you of it; but, in the field, we are alike expoſed to danger; and the pleaſing reflection that every true Briton carries with him into the field of battle, is, that, ſhould he bleed, it is in his country's cauſe; if he dies, 'tis on the bed of honour. I am buſied in preparations for our departure, and have only time to aſſure you, that no circumſtances can change the attachment with which I ſubſcribe myſelf, as ever,

Yours,

MONTACUTE.

Note.—A conſiderable break appears in the correſpondence; during which time it is ſuppoſed Lord Montacute was abſent on the expedition alluded to in the foregoing letter, though it does not appear that there is any thing wanting material to the hiſtory.

LETTER XIX.

The ſame to the ſame.

THE preſent campaign has terminated with great honour to the Britiſh arms, as well as to thoſe of its allies, and the King has been pleaſed to conſider the individual ſervices I have performed in a favourable point of view, attributing greatly to them the ſucceſs of our undertakings; in conſequence of which, he has honoured me with an appointment near his perſon. I cannot but feel very ſenſibly the value of this favour, which I, nevertheleſs, receive with fear and apprehenſion. In cheriſhing his ſacred perſon, and in conſulting on the beſt meaſures for the ſafety of his ſubjects and dominions, I dread much the peſtilential

air

air of a court, and fear every thing from the baneful influence of all that ſurrounds it. For full fifteen years that I have been accuſtomed to warlike exploits, the court is become foreign to me. What part am I now to act? Is it that of a courtier, which I deſpiſe, or muſt I appear a ſingular, eccentric being? Muſt I forget the maxims of nature, and imbibe thoſe in oppoſition to them? Muſt I approve in public what my conſcience condemns, or, more bold, and more upright, excite the enmity of thoſe courtiers, whoſe intereſts I ſhall ſupplant, without wiſhing to do ſo? What a ſad alternative! But I will obey the mandate; 'tis my duty. If, however, my life is ſpared, I ſhall yet hope for the pleaſure of ſeeing you, as his Majeſty will not ſurely object to the vacation I ſhall requeſt of him, when affairs of ſtate do not immediately require my preſence. I remember to have read

the

the advice which is given in a French author to a young man, whoſe conduct had recommended him to the favour of his ſovereign, and who had been appointed to a ſtation near his perſon:

"Montre toi à la cour, dès les premiers momens tel que tu veux être le reſte de ta vie. Ton caractere, une fois annoncé ne te coutera plus rien à ſoutenir; ta conduite n'aura rien d'equivoque; on ne cherchera point, a te demeler ni a te ſurprendre. Tu, t'epargnera ainſi bien des epreuves dangereuſes et des combats inutiles."

This piece of advice may not be unacceptable to my friend, who, perhaps, with myſelf, would cheerfully reſign in favour of another thoſe honours, which obligatory duties, not inclination, attach on him.—

LETTER XX.

ALPHONSO DI BORGO *to Lord* MONTACUTE.

THE dull uniformity of the life I lead has been doubly aggravated, ſince I have been denied, of late, the privilege of writing to you. The letter I received from your Lordſhip, informing me of your being deſtined to take the command of the expedition meditated by England on the coaſts of France, ſeemed to deprive me, at once, of the only ſource of enjoyment left me in this world. It gives me ſincere pleaſure at this period to congratulate you, not only on your ſafe arrival in England, but on the many laurels you have added to your diſtinguiſhed fame: from the reports with which the gazettes furniſhed us of the gallant exploits

exploits achieved under your diſcipline, it ſeemed, indeed, doubtful, that I ſhould ever have renewed the privilege of which I now avail myſelf. With the greateſt anxiety have I glanced over the details of every action, fearful to find your Lordſhip's name among the fallen. Nothing of moment has tranſpired in the eventful hiſtory of *my* life worth relating to you; therefore the thread of my narration remains unbroken.

Ethelburgha has, at length, ſpite of my endeavours to oppoſe it, taken the veil. She wrote, during her novitiate, a very affecting letter to the Counteſs Wilhelmina, relating the ſad ſtory of her misfortunes, without diſguiſing, in the leaſt, that part in which I was ſo nearly connected in them: this letter was conveyed to her own hands, and has made a very viſible alteration in her health and ſpirits.

The perusal of it affected her to an uncommon degree; and she now vehemently regrets that she was not acquainted with every circumstance previous to our marriage. The cheerfulness I endeavour to assume, hides but ill the feelings of a heart in which Ethelburgha's image ever lives. With Wilhelmina, the gay bloom of health is exchanged for a pallid, deadly hue; silent grief preys upon her vitals. The physicians who have been called to her aid, attribute it to a disease of the mind, in which their skill is ineffectual. The attentions, the little offices of kindness, I endeavour to show her, seem distressing to her. She utters no complaint, no reproach, but of herself; condemns herself as the author of my sufferings and her own. My heart bleeds when I gaze upon her altered features, and behold the ravages sorrow has made in her frame, who, to any man but one unhappily

blinded to his own happineſs, was every thing that the mind could wiſh or deſire. What a world of woe is this! and what a ſtrange creature is man, that his paſſions and affections ſhould be ſo ungovernable!

The proſpects of feſtivity here, have been exchanged for a general gloom, to the great mortification and diſappointment of thoſe ſenſeleſs beings, who feel the ſum of all their wiſhes made up in a conſtant routine of diſſipation, and whoſe minds are devoid of any intellectual enjoyment; and to thoſe courtiers and tools of inſipidity, whoſe unmeaning and cringing attentions are ſo hateful and diſguſting.

The retirement in which we live, precludes the poſſibility of this annoyance, which has incurred the reſentment of my father, whoſe

aim is popularity, and who conſiders the attachment of theſe inſignificant beings neceſſary to the attainment of any of his viſionary projects. Such, indeed, do they now begin to appear even to himſelf: brooding care ſits upon his brow, and the firſt-fruits of diſappointment are depicted in his character and conduct. Moroſe, reſerved, and diſſatisfied, he eyes every one moſt ſcrutinouſly, and ſtarts if any one unexpectedly approaches his preſence. He has now too much leiſure to reflect on a life miſpent: this reflection muſt be accompanied with others equally alarming, when he conſiders that not his proſpects alone are on the point of being blaſted, but with them the peace and happineſs of a ſon. The Counteſs Wilhelmina, with Ethelburgha, are alike his victims; and the miniſter, who dotes on this his only daughter, may juſtly view in him the author of her miſeries.

Can

Can you conceive a more complicated and diſtreſſing picture for contemplation? Oh, no! it baffles the power of eloquence to deſcribe to you the conflicts I have to encounter, which give me up a prey to the moſt poignant grief.

I thank you for that advice with which you conclude your laſt letter; but, for myſelf, I ſhall never court that ſtation I am unfitted to maintain. When honours are conferred from a due ſenſe of intrinſic worth and merit, then it becomes the duty of every man to endeavour to deſerve them, by wearing them nobly, and evincing a fortitude of mind, at all times ſuperior to the uncertainties of the ſmiles or frowns of fortune.

May you, my Lord, long enjoy that high diſtinction you have juſtly gained; and to

wiſh proſperity to your country, I would only pray that every other election of your ſovereign may reflect equal honour on himſelf. I encloſe with this a tranſcript of Ethelburgha's letter to the Counteſs Wilhelmina, and ſubſcribe myſelf yours moſt faithfully,

A. DI BORGO.

LETTER

LETTER XXI.

ETHELBURGHA *to the Counteſs* WILHELMINA DI BORGO.

Encloſed in the preceding.

Dated from the Convent of the Carmelites.

FORGIVE, Madam, the preſumption of an unhappy girl, who breaks in upon your joys with a tale of ſorrow. That child of poverty, whom your compaſſion would have noticed, is now ſecure from the frowns and oppreſſions of a cruel world, in which ſhe has experienced bitter pains and ſorrows. You, indeed, are the innocent cauſe of thoſe ſorrows; yet be not alarmed. The hapleſs Ethelburgha ſhall never interpoſe between you and happineſs, ſince

ſince ſhe has become a voluntary ſacrifice, to ſecure to you the fulleſt poſſeſſion of it this world can afford. Ah, Madam! little did your unſuſpecting nature conceive, that when you offered me an employment near your perſon, you would have cheriſhed a ſcorpion, who, feeling the genial warmth of your ſmiles, *might* have blaſted your peace and repoſe. No, Madam, though Ethelburgha is poor, yet would ſhe not ſtoop to a diſhonourable action. This child of ſorrow who now addreſſes you, once dared to raiſe her preſumptuous thoughts to the affections of the Count di Borgo: ere this ſuſceptible breaſt knew love but by name, did it beat with the fondeſt regard for your lord and huſband.

You are noble, generous, and humane; you love him alſo. The helliſh arts of pride and ambition have torn him from my bleeding

ing boſom! from a being, who, though born to humble fortunes, may, perhaps, be equally beloved of God with yourſelf. Yet, lady, I have made my wilful reſignation of him, and with him have renounced an ungrateful world. Curſe me not, then, as the blaſter of your joys! Before I knew the ſplendid alliance to which he was deſtined, I loved him, even ere I reflected on the diſtinctions fate had placed between us; but with a fortitude becoming a nobler ſoul than Ethelburgha poſſeſſes, I abandoned the fond deluſive hopes I had unwarily cheriſhed, and determined never to interrupt that felicity he is capable of communicating, and partaking with you.

Lady, farewell! Judge not too harſhly of poor Ethelburgha: this is the only privilege ſhe claims, or to which ſhe may conſider herſelf entitled: think for a moment the pangs this

this youthful heart has ſuffered, and then condemn her not. And now that you are in poſſeſſion of the fatal cauſe that renders the Count Alphonſo inſenſible to thoſe pure joys he might partake in your arms, employ well thoſe winning arts, thoſe irreſiſtible attractions, which ſpring from a conſcious affection, and the unbounded love your heart owns to the partner of your life.

And ſhould the tear of compaſſion ſtart at this peruſal of my misfortunes, oh check it not: but pity that being, who unwittingly cheriſhed the illuſions of a youthful dream of love, and fell a martyr to its influence on her mind. I muſt endeavour to conquer this unlawful paſſion; I will repreſs my feelings; and, in ſupplication to the mercy-ſeat of Heaven, weep my folly, and endeavour to obliterate that

that image which now reigns in my breaſt, and oppoſes a ſteady reſignation to thoſe ſacred duties connected with the life I am going to embrace. Lady, farewell!

ETHELBURGHA.

LETTER

LETTER XXII.

ALPHONSO DI BORGO *to Lord* MONTACUTE.

'TIS with much difficulty that I collect my haraſſed ſpirits to apologize to you for my long ſilence. I deſpaired at one time of ever finding myſelf ſufficiently compoſed to avail myſelf of your indulgence, which is the only ſupport to me under the many ills I am doomed to ſuffer. Your letters are at all times replete with every conſolatory requiſite; and could I have followed that rule of conduct, which you not only adviſe but practiſe, I ſhould not be now the wretched ſufferer I am. You are, nevertheleſs, too partial to my faults, and allow friendſhip to operate as a veil

to

to many errors I am ſenſible of in my nature; I have indulged too much in a dream of happineſs never to be attained. The evils of this world are incalculable; nor are the moſt perfect pleaſures it affords without their alloy. I have been too much the unſophiſticated child of Nature; I have ſuffered the impetuous paſſions of my youth to be led unbridled.

Your friendly offices fail in their effect; they are beſtowed on a being deaf and inſenſible to the voice of reaſon, and who nouriſhes the grief which conſumes him. It is no eaſy taſk to adminiſter to a mind diſeaſed, or to pluck from the memory a rooted ſorrow!

The fair, the beautiful form of the Counteſs Wilhelmina, is ſinking gradually to decay; and I much fear that ſhe is not only beyond the reach of phyſical aid, but ſunk into a lethargy

lethargy of grief, from which, even the voice of love can never awake her. My time is divided in miniſtering every aſſiſtance her painful ſituation demands, in deploring my untoward fate, and in deriving yet ſome conſolation from your friendſhip.

LETTER XXIII.

The ſame to the ſame.

THE ſpirit of Wilhelmina has quitted its earthly tenement of clay, and fled to heaven: this additional ſtroke has almoſt annihilated me. Why am I reſerved to witneſs the decrees of fate? or can it yet have any accumulated horrors in ſtore for the wretched Di Borgo? The wreck of all my hopes is now for ever gone; I have nothing left to reconcile me to the world.

Dark and ruthleſs are the fiends that ſurround me. Whichever way I turn my wandering thoughts, deſpair, black, direful deſpair, encompaſſes me! Muſt I then conſider

in myſelf the deſtroyer of Wilhelmina? Will the accuſing ſpirit record her murderer's name in heaven?

I am, indeed, become the victim of ambition: the deſpicable diſtinctions of fortune have ſhackled all my hopes; and ſoon muſt I follow Wilhelmina to an untimely grave! My cheek will never more wear the ſmile of content! My heart is ſtung with remorſe! the energies of my ſoul are all ſubdued by the triumph of pride! Alas! it has been but a ſhort triumph! Nature will ſpeak in frequent whiſpers to the feeling mind, nor can the voice of conſcience be overpowered.

I could now meet death with courage; I have no longer reſolution to bear the frowns of fortune, and the longer I exiſt, the more will my grief accumulate. " Death ſhakes the happy;

happy; but he who is a wretch receives him gladly." This is a saying of one of your English authors, and strikes home to the present feelings of my mind.

The luckless Wilhelmina was once the favourite of fortune, the darling of nature; her mind was nobly gifted, and her heart moulded to receive the impressions of virtue, sensibility, and love. Now do her perfections lie buried in the cold grave, and I am left to range this adverse world, desolate and afflicted. This world has no pleasures for a being left to linger in one gloomy round of despondency; I shall now quit it without regret, and embrace death as the only relief now left for your afflicted friend,

ALPHONSO DI BORGO.

LETTER XXIV.

The ſame to the ſame.

TO linger here is madneſs!—To hover about theſe walls, which conſtantly preſent to my view the recollection of all the varied ſorrows I have experienced—to ſee the turrets of thoſe cloiſters, in which the too lovely Ethelburgha is immured, never to be freed, cannot but increaſe the horrors that ſurround me. My reſolution is to enter the army, and to enrol myſelf in the liſts of fame. The preſent alliance of this country with England and the Swiſs, againſt France, opens the faireſt proſpect to the enterpriſing mind. But it is with other views that I embrace this kind of life.

'Tis

'Tis to ſhut out thought, and, in the toils and turmoils of a ſoldier's life, endeavour to forget my wretchedneſs. There is no conſolation to be derived here. Freezing, chilling apathy, ſteels the breaſt of my father againſt a being, who has thus fallen a ſacrifice to the paſſions which burn high within him. In ſpeaking thus of him, to whom I am indebted for my exiſtence, I may be condemned. But through him is not that very exiſtence become a burden? Have not the keeneſt ſenſations that can dwell in the human breaſt been harrowed up? You have conjured me not to conceal from you my moſt inmoſt thoughts. Hear, then, thoſe confeſſions from him, whom the tenets of philoſophy cannot arm againſt the ſuſceptibility of nature.

My father's increaſing diſſatisfaction, from diſappointments in his fondeſt hopes and ex-

pectations, are but too viſible through the gloom which veils his ſtern aſpect. The miniſter, who is in many reſpects a weak man, ſeems ſeriouſly affected by the recent loſs of his daughter, and ſullen diſcontent ſits upon his brow. Frequent have been their interviews of late, accompanied by an air of myſtery. Methinks ſome ſecret anxiety, more than ſuggeſtion may authorize, affects them equally—time may unfold it. I have not yet communicated to the Baron my deſigns, but I cannot foreſee the ſmalleſt oppoſition from him. The projects he had in view, as far as I was the object of them, are fruſtrated; nor could any conſideration induce me to continue here under the view of any future proſpects of elevation, even ſhould ſuch views be compatible with his preſent circumſtances.

My

My letters, I fear, can afford you little ſatiſfaction, but from the tender intereſt you manifeſt in every thing that concerns your diſconſolate, though attached friend,

ALPHONSO DI BORGO.

LETTER XXV.

The ſame to the ſame.

AFTER the ſubſtance of my laſt letter, you will doubtleſs be ſurpriſed to find this dated from Brunſwic. I have been diverted from putting my intentions into execution, for the preſent at leaſt, by an event which promiſes to be the forerunner of ſtill greater and more intereſting: an event, which has thrown the whole capital into the greateſt conſternation, and unfolded a myſtery, in which was enveloped ſuch a ſcene of infamy, ſuch a tale of horror, that my heart bleeds at the relation of it. Nor could it be conceived, that ambition, which is the groundwork of it, ſhould ſo far miſlead a rational being, that, to gratify its ends,

ends, the eternal happineſs of an immortal ſoul ſhould not be reckoned in competition with it. However, to proceed. Rinalto, the long-tried confidant of the Baron di Borgo's wretched deſigns, and ſtill more wicked perpetrations, had for ſome cauſe excited ſuſpicions in his mind, and, through the fear of being betrayed by him, has cauſed him to be aſſaſſinated. Two hirelings were employed to execute this horrid deed, who waylaid Rinalto as he was croſſing the foreſt in the evening, which leads to his habitation, and plunged the murderous weapon in his heart: in this ſituation, and with little ſigns of life, he was found a ſhort time afterwards, and carried home, where in a few hours he expired, having committed to the care of Jacintha, his wife, a packet, to be delivered to me in the event of his deceaſe. I have tranſcribed in the ſame words, the foul, barbarous relation it contains,

and

and encloſe it to you. The aſſaſſins have been apprehended, and confeſſed their employer, who proves to be no other than the Baron di Borgo!

You will read the wrongs that have been heaped on poor Ethelburgha. Oh, how will her heart bleed when ſhe ſhall know the diſaſtrous fate of her lamented parents! Cut off in the very flower of life; herſelf deprived of her birthright; alienated from the deareſt and moſt invaluable privileges of life—a father's fondneſs, and maternal care! It muſt be the painful taſk of your friend to unravel to her the myſtery which hangs over her, and tranſmit to her the record intruſted to me.

Yet, how will her tender frame endure the conflict! Buried to the world, her thoughts and her affections perhaps, ere this, weaned from

from it, and all it contains, what agonizing pangs will ſhe endure! Far from the voice of ſympathizing friendſhip, in the flinty hearts of thoſe by whom ſhe is ſurrounded, where will ſhe find ſupport and conſolation in this trying hour? The rigid duties of a conventual life imperceptibly ſteel the mind againſt the ſofter emotions of the ſoul.

Oh, dare I cheriſh now a gleam of hope, that Ethelburgha would liſten to the arguments that friendſhip, that love would ſuggeſt, and, by accepting a releaſe from her religious engagements, reſtore herſelf to the world in her true character; then might Alphonſo yet be happy; then might the privilege be his, excluſively, to chaſe every gloomy reflection from her thoughts, and by every ingenious device that the moſt tender affection could in-

ſpire,

ſpire, diſſipate her ſorrows, and awaken her to joy.

But the ſtigma that attaches to my name chills my too ſanguine imagination. And muſt the father's obloquy deſcend to the ſon? Muſt I be branded with the name of murderer? Oh, no!—Reaſon forbid it! Almighty Powers! how have I ſhuddered at the projects of ambition my father has planned! and could I have imagined that by ſuch foul means they were to be obtained, rather would I have periſhed, than have lived the object of them.

To Ethelburgha I muſt ſpeedily elucidate the ſad hiſtory, leſt by public rumour an incoherent relation ſhould reach her of the melancholy events which have of late taken place at Brunſwic.—Adieu!

ALPHONSO DI BORGO.

LETTER

LETTER XXVI.

To the Count ALPHONSO DI BORGO.

Enclosed with the preceding.

THE CONFESSIONS OF RINALTO.

THE wretched Rinalto, ere he quits this world, leaves behind him the relation of his guilt. Once did peace dwell in his breaſt; nor the ſelf-accuſing ſtings of conſcience reproach him, till he was enticed to exchange a life of humble content, for the gilded hopes of abhorred gain, to be obtained by the moſt horrible means. Oh, my Lord Count! my hand trembles, my pen ſhrinks from its office; yet, before I die, I would endeavour to relieve my

my mind of half its burden, by affording the means of atonement for the foul crimes with which my ſoul is ſtained. I need not retrace my firſt employment, nor the occaſion of my being diſmiſſed from it. To juſtify my conduct to the world, is not now my intention. In ſweet retirement my days glided peacefully, till the Baron your father, envious of my humble joys, ſtepped in between them, and greedily did I ſuffer myſelf to be enſnared in that fatal net, which has eventually placed me beyond the hopes of mercy! Deluded by the flattering proſpects he held out to me, from one ſtep to another he hurried me, till theſe hands were at length imbrued in blood! The former miniſter, the Count Leiptzein, was a man univerſally beloved. The Baron di Borgo, jealous of his power, ſoon conceived the greateſt averſion to him, which he had policy ſufficient to conceal; and with that

duplicity

duplicity of character, which he is ſo able in aſſuming, carried towards him an exterior of the warmeſt friendſhip. His deportment, even under a monkiſh garb, was alike contemptuous and haughty; and although not deficient in politeneſs, his manners were peremptory and imperious: ſenſible to his power and his intereſt at court, he thought nothing ſhould reſiſt his inclinations, or oppoſe his will.

Impetuous, violent, and corrupted by pride and ambition, he could never ſubdue thoſe paſſions which he cheriſhed, nor riſe ſuperior to reſentment. Implacable through vanity, he gloried in never forgiving; his enmity would heighten by rancour, and he would ſacrifice every thing to the attainment of his projects, or the gratification of revenge. Thus have I delineated a character I have had, alas! too frequent opportunities of diſcerning. In ſuch

ſuch a mind, the ſeat of every worſt paſſion, the baſeſt reſolves could be ſuggeſted and fulfilled. The Count Leiptzein's deſtruction was meditated and accompliſhed. The miniſter formerly reſided at the caſtle which ſtands near this cottage; 'twas there the ſanguinary act was completed. One of his ſervants was bribed to become an accomplice; and by the promiſe of a large reward, and a ſafe paſſport from Germany, was prevailed upon to infuſe a deadly potion in his maſter's goblet at his evening's repaſt, which operated in the ſleep of *death!* Rinalto was the agent in theſe deſigns of the Count di Borgo, and under ſo able a villain they were too ſurely executed. The Count Leiptzein had then been married but a few months to a woman equally amiable and beloved with himſelf. Grief preyed upon her mind for the loſs of her lord, which was attributed to accidental death: a fever ſet-

tled on her brain, and ſhe expired in giving birth to a daughter, who, thank heaven, yet lives to revenge the injuries that have been inflicted on her. She is now immured within a cloiſter's walls, whither ſhe was driven to ſeek for ſhelter from an oppreſſive world. It was, indeed, her own deſire, yet forced to it by calamity. I obtained her requeſt from the Baron, who eagerly ſeized the opportunity ſhe had ſuggeſted of burying her and her wrongs in obſcurity. She has ever been eſteemed the daughter of Rinalto: no one has intereſted himſelf in her welfare but yourſelf; yet, if you could love her as the offspring of Rinalto, how much more ſhall you feel alive to revenge her wrongs in the character of the daughter of the Count Leiptzein! Ethelburgha Leiptzein is her name! This motive had determined me to leave with you this memorial; and the teſtimonials you will find with

this, will be ſufficient to reſtore her to the world in her proper character.

The ſcrutinizing eye of the Baron is ever on the watch, and already he miſtruſts the confidant of his foul deſigns; nor would his vengeance be tardy in purſuing the leaſt ſhadow of ſuſpicion, on which he might ground the fear of being betrayed. My ſoul is oppreſſed with guilt, and the only ſecret ſatisfaction I can now enjoy in this world, is the proſpect of leaving, after my death, the records of my guilt! When that awful hour ſhall come, when my confeſſion muſt be amply made at the high tribunal of Heaven, oh for mercy on the wretched Rinalto!

Should Jacintha ſurvive me, let not her paſſive obedience to a tyrant's will confound her

her with the guilty: to your clemency and compaſſion her deſtitute ſituation recommends her; and may the eternal powers proſper and protect you! Thus prays

RINALTO.

LETTER XXVII.

ALPHONSO DI BORGO *to the Counteſs* ETHELBURGHA LEIPTZEIN.

HARD is the taſk allotted to Alphonſo: he who would gladly ſacrifice his life to enſure your peace, is compelled by painful neceſſity to break in upon it; he would fain prepare you, and fortify your mind againſt the freſh ſufferings it has yet to endure, in peruſing the encloſed narrative *. But, oh! what language ſhall prevail, what Syren's voice can allure you from the path of ſorrow which your feet muſt tread? The moſt ſacred obligations en-

* The reader will obſerve, that the narration preceding this letter, is ſuppoſed likewiſe to accompany this.

force

force this duty on me; and in participating in your ſorrows can I alone alleviate them. To wound thus your meek and quiet ſpirit, already ſinking under the woes it has undergone, is torture to my feelings. I find words but feeble interpreters of my mind; but, oh! if ever Alphonſo has been dear to you, by the pure affection he has ever cheriſhed, he implores you ſtill to view in him the avenger of your wrongs. His being's end and aim is yours to command: the fountain of affliction muſt flow, grief muſt corrode your tender heart, yet the heart that pities it moſt, ſpeaks in

ALPHONSO DI BORGO.

LETTER XXVIII.

ETHELBURGHA LEIPTZEIN *to the Count* ALPHONSO DI BORGO.

AH! wherefore, then, awake me from that ſecret dream of peace and repoſe, I had but juſt begun to taſte in the conſolation of religion? Wherefore open afreſh thoſe wounds, which ſecluſion from the world, and all its chain of miſeries, had cloſed? But to what a ſcene of horrors have I awakened! Ignorance had been bliſs, compared to the ſtriving ſenſations of my ſoul: there wanted but this new ſtroke of calamity to make up the meaſure of my woe! My father ſavagely murdered! My mother the hapleſs victim of fell barbarity! Oh, 'twould have been mercy to have included the offspring in the general wreck. Gracious

powers,

powers, that, in the ſhape of men, ſuch monſters ſhould exiſt! Could not the pleadings of humanity avert their dire purpoſe? Oh, no! each avenue to the heart was barred. My brain is on the rack! Revenge (affection to the wronged authors of my ſad exiſtence) and deſpair alternately occupy me! Whom then ſhall I truſt? Yet, hold my heart, be firm: the hour of awful retribution is at hand, and in the avenging arm of Heaven will I have confidence!

Oh, Alphonſo! wretched Alphonſo! where ſhall you find extenuation of a father's crime? Can he elude the arm of juſtice? On the ſcaffold muſt he expiate his guilt! Yet is he ſtill your father.

He has robbed me of the deareſt treaſure this earth affords, debarred me from taſting

the ſweets of a father's bleſſing, a mother's ſoft embrace, rent aſunder the deareſt ties of nature, and abandoned me to an unfeeling, unpitying world!

What fell demon could prompt him to this act? Was it Ambition, Jealouſy, or Envy, or the united train of Diſcord's band? Oh, ere I knew that in the name of Leiptzein I ſhould revere a parent, the godlike virtues that ſhone ſo conſpicuous in his character, excited the juſt admiration and eſteem of the multitude; and my mother too—yes, ſhe was the idol of the poor, the example for the good; yet, even their virtues were their bane, and for them they periſhed!

Who ſhall now eſpouſe my juſt reſentment? Who will ſupplicate the King for juſtice on the offender? I aſk not thee, Alphonſo.

phonſo. Yet in this world I can no more appear, nor at the foot of majeſty demand puniſhment on the guilty! In the deep receſſes of a cloiſter I am now immured, while this feeble frame retains vital animation.

Yet the King is merciful and juſt: the honour, the dignity of his crown will ſuffer, ſhould this ſtain be not effaced. He will purſue ſuch meaſures as are lawful; whilſt I in grief and penitence offer up, at the ſuperior throne of Heaven, my frequent oriſons for the peace of the departed ſpirits of the parents of

ETHELBURGHA!

LETTER XXIX.

ALPHONSO DI BORGO *to the Counteſs* ETHELBURGHA LEIPTZEIN.

ALAS! my Ethelburgha, for ſo I could yet call thee, let the ſympathizing voice of a woe-worn heart penetrate into the deep receſſes which conceal you: reſtore yourſelf once more to the world; nor ſeek, in vain, to find peace in monaſtic ſecluſion. The King eſpouſes your cauſe, and already is the guilty cited to the awful tribunal of juſtice! No longer is there any doubt that the Baron di Borgo is the traitor! Juſtice now will ſentence guilt! But, oh! amidſt the deep reſentment that I feel, a remnant of filial kindneſs ſtill lingers in my breaſt, and pleads his cauſe.

Oppreſſed with love and anger, what foes oppoſe *my* peace; while love and indignation alternate take their ſway, while pity would preſerve a wretched father! Yet my heart recoils from the baſe deed; the very thought congeals my blood! Oh dire effects of lawleſs ambition!

Alas! what a hapleſs deſtiny is mine! But, Ethelburgha, amidſt the juſt reſentment that fills your breaſt, in contemplating your parents' wrongs, forget not quite Alphonſo: think yet what faithful love inſpires. Yes, Ethelburgha may forgive her thoughts of him, who for her ſake alone would wiſh to live. Let not thy virtue take offence, to find a faint remembrance of your love to Alphonſo yet kindle in your mind, nor count him ſharer in a father's guilt!

The

The faireſt proſpects lie open to you: thoſe honours and dignities which are yours by inheritance await you, and the King anxiouſly ſeeks in your perſon to redreſs the injuries you have ſuſtained. Already is a courier diſpatched to Rome, to obtain the Pope's edict for your releaſe from your conventual vows; and all Brunſwic eagerly anticipate the pleaſures of beholding in you the heireſs of Leiptzein.

By the love you have acknowledged for Alphonſo, by all his hopes of happineſs, he implores, he entreats you, not to nouriſh hopeleſs grief, but to accede to the earneſt deſire of a heart eager to embrace the long-loved object of its affections, and in his faithful heart to pour all your griefs; or would you doom him to wander far an exile from his country? No other way remains: or ſhould this

this be little, his vital blood ſhall gladly flow to appeaſe your righteous vengeance, and he will deem himſelf happy in the wound that renders peace to Ethelburgha.

LETTER XXX.

The ſame to the ſame.

WHEREFORE are you ſilent? What ſad foreboding fears muſt I not cheriſh, when I find you deaf and inſenſible to the call of love! The ſentence of juſtice is paſſed—the Baron's doom is mitigated! The body of prieſts and feculars, of whom he had been ſo long conſidered as the head, have interfered, and aſſumed as a prerogative, to which they were juſtly entitled, that of pronouncing his doom! Lingering penance is aſſigned him; no companion but his wretched thoughts will ever beguile the tedious years of his exiſtence; he is forbid the privilege of ſociety, that, in gloomy ſilence, he may reflect on the enormity

mity of his crime, and, by abſtinence and faſting, endure a life of expiation! The wretch that periſhes by the axe is happy, compared to the torments of that being, who is always expoſed to the pangs of ſelf-accuſing conſcience! From that power no one can flee. 'Tis ever preſent with him: in vain he ſeeks oblivion! 'Tis denied.

'Tis ſaid the ſtroke of adverſe fate is conquered by endurance: would I could find it ſo! Is then Ethelburgha indifferent to the call of majeſty? Will not the ſolicitation of a generous monarch effect what is refuſed to the throbbings of a lover's breaſt? You will aſk me how I can urge my ſuit at ſuch a time as this—recoil with horror, at the idea of uniting yourſelf with the offspring of a murderer! Is it ſo? then ſpeak my doom! Rather than bear this cruel ſuſpenſe, 'twere

mercy

mercy to plunge me into the deepeſt abyſs of woe! Fix but my fate, and I go: never more ſhall Alphonſo importune you, never ſhall you hear the ſigh that rends his heart! His life is in your power, his fate is in your hands; yet oh, forbid it Heaven! Indulge awhile your grief, give full vent to the feelings of your heart; but ſay, that, having thus acted from the impulſe of love and duty, you will yet live to love, and to

ALPHONSO.

LETTER XXXI.

ETHELBURGHA LEIPTZEIN *to the Count* ALPHONSO DI BORGO.

YOU enforce a taſk upon me I am ill able to perform. What avails it, Alphonſo, to dwell on *that* with pain, which will but raiſe the affections, every conſideration bids us now ſubdue? 'Tis hoſtile to my duty to receive your letters, much more ſo to acknowledge them; and though my reaſon is firmly fixed, yet great are your claims on my affection: but were I to be deluded by the gilded toys and pomps of the world, and exchange that life to which I am now habituated, to partake its unreal pleaſures, what reliſh ſhould I find for them? Oh ceaſe, then, to importune me!

Here I can dwell on the extent of my ſufferings, and be ſecure from further trials and afflictions.

Be aſſured, nevertheleſs, the conflict is great, and ſerves to rend, if not ſubdue, my heart; I have confeſſed too much—urge me no further; reſpect the ſacred ties which bind me here. Yea, I entreat you, by all your ſoul has prized on earth, or moſt reveres in heaven, even by the tender love that bound us once, by the ſad tears that fond remembrance ſheds, abandon me—leave me to my fate! Give not way to a degenerate deſpondency, but exert the fortitude of a noble mind in buffetting the tempeſt, and in ſtemming the tide of unruly affections; ſeek for comfort in the intellectual reſource of the mind, in the charms of that ſociety you were deſtined to embelliſh, nor loſe a thought on me.

My

My boſom participates in all your ſufferings, my heart ſhares in your ſorrows. To you the path of fame is open; embrace it: remember that life is the privilege of every being, but fame the privilege of noble minds; while I lament that fate oppoſes a laſting barrier to the peace and happineſs of

ETHELBURGHA.

LETTER XXXII.

ALPHONSO DI BORGO *to the Counteſs* ETHELBURGHA LEIPTZEIN.

ALAS! why, when fated to ſuſtain the loſs of all we love, muſt recollection ſtill keep alive a cureleſs woe? Will then Ethelburgha remain dead to the world? and does my heart ſtill cheriſh life? For whom? For what? What hope can more attract me now? What haſt thou now left to ſeek, Alphonſo? Enjoyments, pomp, life, honours, all for Ethelburgha were dear. Shall I thus loſe the object of all my cares? To me the world is loſt for ever. How long ſhall this cruel conflict divide my breaſt? Farewell, then, every gleam of peace—every hope is fled. Oppreſſed with anguiſh,

anguiſh, and denied the poor relief of pity from a friendly breaſt, ſtill muſt I linger out a life of ſlow conſuming pain; yet, oh! recall thy raſh determination! Come, then, releaſe thyſelf from thoſe vows which the heart never pronounced; and, oh! if Alphonſo has any claim on thy affections, let him aſſert them now.

Let not ſuperſtitious ſcruples influence your mind; let love combat the hated prejudice monaſtic habits would inſpire: come, then, and ſeek in the arms of faithful love, which ſtand open to receive thee, atonement for thy wrongs! Never waſt thou formed to linger out a life of penance within a convent's walls. Come, and diffuſe thy benevolence around, and renew in your perſon thoſe pious exerciſes of zeal and charity, which marked the character of your auguſt, ill-fated parent.

The power now is in thine hands: oh, neglect not, then, the ſacred calls of duty which it impoſes on you; and ſuch a life will ſurely prove more acceptable to the Divine Being, than *that*, a cruel alternative impelled you to embrace! But, if Ethelburgha ſtill reſiſts each ſoft perſuaſion, there remains but one reſource to the wretched Alphonſo. Farewell to life! I go a willing votary to the ſhrine of ſuperſtition, and in the dark cell will I bury the remembrance of my hapleſs fate!

Let not your conſcious ſoul, to ſorrow moved, reflect, too late, how much, how tenderly I loved. With pious care reſtrain your unavailing grief, nor let a tear profane your ſacred veil; nor, when, wearied out with mental ſuffering, my ſoul ſhall take its flight to the regions of eternity, beſtow a ſigh on my cold grave! But let your breaſt glow with new-

new-born raptures; let love divine, dethrone frail mortal love, and make known to your mind immortal joys. 'Tis all blank sadness —black brooding melancholy sits around me —the scene is gloomy. Death, and death alone, can dissolve the chain that binds me to Ethelburgha.—Farewell!

A. DI BORGO.

LETTER XXXIII.

ETHELBURGHA LEIPTZEIN *to the Count* ALPHONSO DI BORGO.

WHAT new ideas crowd upon my mind! Oh, Alphonso! your letter has awakened me to a new exiſtence: you have conquered, and I am no longer inſenſible to my error. Painful has been the ſtruggle, and great the conflict between love and duty. Vain, alas! the attempt to baniſh you from my thoughts. In praiſing the Creator, I have not ceaſed to view the creature; and your claims upon my affection have been but too powerfully remembered. Retard, then, your raſh reſolves, that would only increaſe your miſery; ſeek not, in fruitleſs ſecluſion from the world, that peace which

which Ethelburgha ſought in vain. Her heart has long been yours; ſhe now offers you her hand, and when ſhe has paid the tribute of affection, which Nature prompts, to the memory of the ill-fated authors of her exiſtence, ſhe will, in the preſence of Heaven, ratify the ſolemn compact, which ſhall entitle her to the protection of her beloved Alphonſo. I rely on the delicacy of your attachment to reſpect the duty I have impoſed on myſelf, which flows from the impulſe of filial affection. In due time I will accept the proffered releaſe from the awful vows I have made of eternal devotion to the Supreme Deity; and by relaxing, in ſome degree, from that ſevere reſtraint they impoſed, I may be better prepared to emerge from obſcurity to the ſtation in life to which I am called.

You,

You, Alphonſo, know full well how guileleſs firſt I met your flame; I then thought it no ſin to love: your looks, your words, your love, was my all. Faithful have I found you, and true; and though in theſe lone walls my cheeks may have faded, and the bloom of youth have waſted, yet is my heart the ſame. On innocence and virtue the pitying powers of heaven look down propitious; and oh! may it be our mutual hope, ere we commence a new career of life, that, in the exerciſe of every pious duty, of every charitable virtue, future evils may be averted! My ſpirits are now tranquillized; and, if lingering recollection reminds of ſorrows paſt, the pleaſing contemplation of the future gives riſe to emotions of the pureſt joy. The good and ills of this life are incalculable, therefore let virtue be our guide; and the approbation of the

ſilent

ſilent monitor within our hearts, will enable us to endure more calmly, more reſignedly, the ſevereſt ſtroke of deſtiny! Doubt not the faith of Ethelburgha; her promiſe to you is ſacred and inviolate. The bitter pangs of mortal ſuffering we have alike endured, will ſweeten the proſpect of future happineſs; and our days ſhall glide in that perfect harmony which ſprings from mutual love.

Farewell till that period arrives, which is faſt haſtening, when Ethelburgha need no longer bluſh to call herſelf Alphonſo's.—Adieu!

LETTER XXXIV.

ALPHONSO DI BORGO *to the Counteſs* ETHELBURGHA LEIPTZEIN.

OH, ecſtaſy! and may I then hope that fate, weary of perſecuting her victims, at length relents? or do I not awake from a dream? Oh, my Ethelburgha! what tranſports has not your letter inſtilled into my ſoul! Scarce do I contain the joy I feel; for joy and grief are placed within bounds ſo near to each other, that the paſſage is but the work of a moment. No bounds are ſet to fortune's frowns or ſmiles. With laviſh hands her gifts are ſcattered, and ſhe heaps afflictions almoſt beyond a mortal's ſufferance. I have

have been the hapleſs object of her anger; therefore, the exceſſive tranſports I now experience, become a pleaſing pain: long might my ſuffering mind have hoped in vain to experience it. All the pangs I have felt ſo acutely are now allayed; you have ſpoken the words of comfort to my ſoul, you have reſtored me to life! Alphonſo doubts not your faith: oh, no!—Patiently will he await the great reward you offer him; nor would he render himſelf unworthy of thoſe ſentiments you believe him to poſſeſs, by infringing on the ſacred rights of filial love. He is impreſſed with the more exalted admiration of the perfection of your character: by the obſervance of that mark of reſpect, it is alone in your power to ſhow to the ſainted remembrance of thoſe beings, whoſe virtues are reflected in their offspring—the offspring hitherto of ſorrow! But it will be the delightful privilege of your Alphonſo

to ſweeten the cares of life; and in purſuing the path which you point out, and which alone can enſure real happineſs here and hereafter, become worthy of the ineſtimable bleſſings he derives from the poſſeſſion of Ethelburgha. Wherefore, then, ſuppreſs the great emotions of my heart? I can no longer diſguiſe them: gratitude, love, and the moſt refined affection, thy truth and purity demand from me. Eternal fidelity I have ſworn, and I will keep it. Our ſpouſal rites will glad the exulting capital, who have deplored thy fate, and called aloud for vengeance on thy wrongs!

When we contemplate theſe ſtrange events, it leads us to adore the wiſdom of the immortal powers! How ſhall my ſoul with gratitude repay this precious gift you ſo voluntarily beſtow? Yet, while life informs my breaſt, will I prove thy tender, faithful Alphonſo,

phonſo, reſtore thee to peace, calm thy ſorrows, live and die with thee!

Is it then given me ſoon fearleſs to claſp you in my fond embrace? and ſhall we then, without pang, together lead our lives? Tranſporting thought! Fly ſwift, ye moments, till that hour comes, which ſees in Alphonſo the happieſt of mankind! Till then—adieu!

LETTER

LETTER XXXV.

ALPHONSO DI BORGO *to Lord* MONTACUTE.

PEACE, to which I have long been a ſtranger, at length dawns within my breaſt! To you, who have leſſened my ſufferings by the tender intereſt and participation you have made in them, I haſten to communicate the happieſt tidings that ever ſpake to the human heart! Ethelburgha at length conſents to crown my long-tried affection with the nobleſt gift this world could offer me—in her hand.

Abandoning myſelf to deſpair, abſorbed with grief, and a prey to the keeneſt intellectual pangs, from the fear of not poſſeſſing ſufficient influence over her mind, to impel her to

to yield to the arguments I urged in favour of her releaſe from her conventual vows, and on the point of devoting myſelf (as a laſt reſource) to a life of penance and devotion. In this ſtate of mind, reduced to ſad deſpondency, I wrote to Ethelburgha, communicating the reſolution, to which ſharp neceſſity had driven me; painting to her the life of misfortune I had endured in a world, which, without her, had loſt its charms for me. To her generous ſpirit and feeling mind I attribute the noble conduct ſhe has evinced. I muſt be unworthy of her, did I not juſtly acknowledge the conſideration it marks for my happineſs, which has ſurmounted the almoſt inſuperable obſtacles that were oppoſed to it, and given the deciſive victory to the union of two faithful hearts.

A few months which herſelf has ſet apart as a juſt tribute to the memory of her parents, will elapſe, before the altar confirms the ſacred bonds by which my heart has long been united to Ethelburgha; and, in the progreſſive view of future life, I trace indeſcribable happineſs. With the power to purſue the generous inclination of her ſoul, the ſeeds of benevolence will be unſparingly diffuſed around: the widow and the orphan will ſhare the bounty of her liberal hand, and have reaſon to bleſs that myſterious Providence which has reſtored her to the world; while I, ſo bound in grateful ties, feel bleſſed beyond deſcription.

And though it ſhould ſeem my mind is all engroſſed in reflections ſo pleaſing, yet, to a ſoul like yours, warmed by Nature with every generous paſſion, the recital will not be unpleaſing;

pleaſing; and were that friend here, in whom I moſt confide, and to whom I ſtand moſt indebted for conſolation through a tedious ſeries of painful events, which prudence could not foreſee, or caution prevent, there were, then, nothing wanting to complete the happineſs of him, whoſe higheſt privilege will be, at all times, that of ſubſcribing himſelf, with every ſentiment of reſpect, eſteem, and gratitude,

My Lord,

Your moſt faithful ſervant and friend,

A. DI BORGO.

THE END.

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